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Vocabulary Readers

Voyage of the *Fram*



by Tanner Ottley Gay

Number of Words: 611

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Strategy Focus

As you read, **monitor** your understanding of the voyage to the North Pole. Reread to **clarify** your understanding.



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

BOSTON

Key Vocabulary

ascent an upward climb

endeavored tried

entangled twisted together

ratlines small ropes that make a ladder
up a ship's mast

rigging the system of ropes, chains, and
other gear used to control a ship's sails

seasoned experienced; skilled

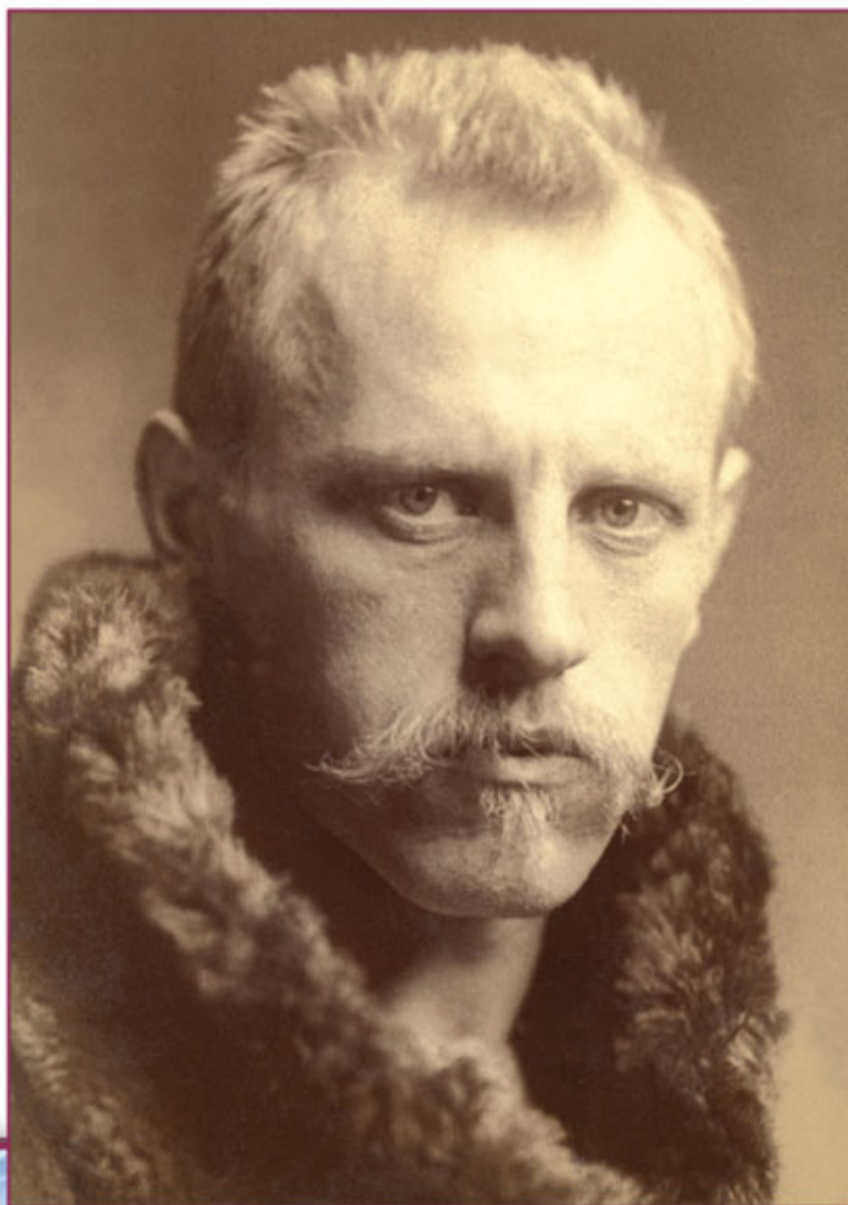
treacherous dangerous

Word Teaser

Food just needs salt and pepper, but
people need experience before they
are _____.

In the 1800s, European ships sailed all over the world. But no ship had ever reached the North Pole. The waters there were too **treacherous**. Ice in the Arctic Ocean could trap ships or even crush them to pieces.

One young Norwegian explorer thought he could sail to the North Pole safely. His name was Fridtjof Nansen (fritt-yof nahn-sen).





Nansen did research on shipwrecks in the North Pole. He got an idea. What if he built a new kind of ship? If this vessel hit the ice, it would not get wrecked. When ice pushed up against the ship, the ship would lift right up and onto the ice. Then the ice and the ship could slowly float across the Arctic Ocean to the North Pole!

Some people laughed at the idea. But Nansen raised the money to build his special ship. The ship had all the equipment and **rigging** of a sailing ship. It also had an engine. Nansen named the ship the *Fram*. That means “forward” in Norwegian.





Nansen planned his North Pole voyage carefully. He chose twelve experienced, or **seasoned**, sailors to go with him.

In the summer of 1893, the *Fram* left Norway. From the start, the crew was very watchful. Every day, sailors climbed rope ladders called **ratlines**. It was a long climb, and the sailors had to be careful not to get their feet **entangled**, or twisted, in the ropes. Up and up they went. The dangerous **ascent** brought the sailors to the top of the mast. There they could look out for icebergs and other hazards.

When the ship reached the freezing Arctic waters, it was suddenly surrounded by ice. The ice put pressure on the ship. This caused the *Fram* to rise and rest on top of the ice. Nansen's idea worked!

The *Fram* drifted northwest on the ice. The voyage lasted for a whole year. Still, the *Fram* didn't drift into the North Pole, as Nansen had hoped it would. He was disappointed. What should he do?



Nansen made a bold decision. He would leave the ship and try to make it to the North Pole. Nansen and a crew member gathered kayaks, sleds, and dogs. Then they set off across the ice.

The two men knew they couldn't return to the ship. It would drift onward without them. They would have to make their own way back to safety.



The men **endeavored** to get to the North Pole. They got closer than anyone had been before. But soon they couldn't go any farther. Huge ice mounds blocked their way. Finally they were forced to turn back.

The men headed south, to a group of islands. They built a hut of stone and ice and camped there for the winter. It was a difficult time. They had to shoot polar bears for food. But the two men survived.

Nansen and his companion lived for nine months in this snow-covered hut.



When summer arrived, the men headed south again. A passing ship stopped to pick them up. It took them back to Norway.

Meanwhile, their ship, the *Fram*, had drifted almost exactly the way Nansen predicted it would. In the summer of 1896, the ship got free of the ice near a group of Arctic islands. From there, the ship sailed home. It arrived just days after Nansen and Johansen had returned to Norway. The whole crew had a joyful reunion. Everyone had survived!



Although Nansen did not reach the North Pole, he was a hero. His discoveries taught the world a great deal about the Arctic Ocean. His voyage also inspired many future sailors.

Today, the *Fram* is on display in Oslo, Norway. Every year, many people visit the ship and learn about its exciting voyage.





Responding

Putting Words to Work

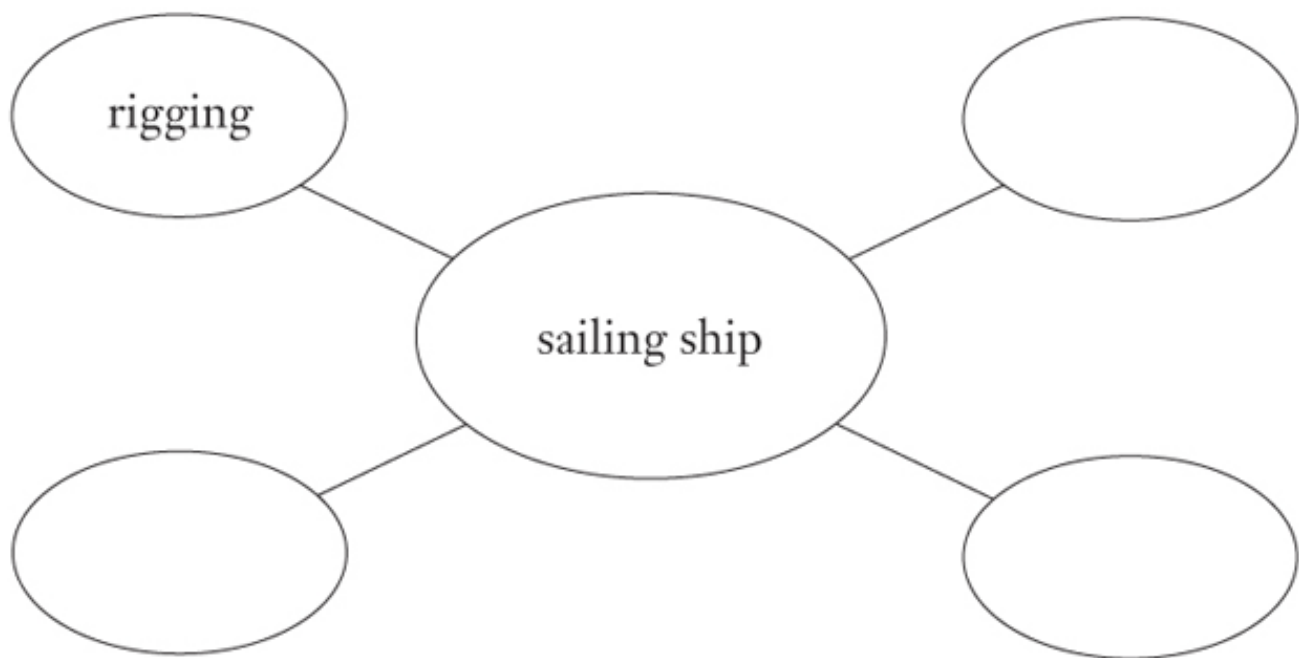
1. Is a **seasoned** sailor likely to do a good job on a ship? Why?
2. Complete the following sentence:
I got **entangled** in my dog's leash when _____.
3. When Nansen **endeavored** to reach the North Pole by leaving the ship, did you predict that he would make it? Explain your answer.
4. Why was the ice so **treacherous** for ships built before the *Fram*?
5. **PARTNER ACTIVITY:** Think of a word you learned in the text. Explain its meaning to your partner and give an example.

Answer to Word Teaser

seasoned

Word Builder

What do the words **rigging** and **ratlines** have in common? They are both parts of a sailing ship. Copy this word web. Add other words that name things on a sailing ship. If you need help, you can use an encyclopedia or another reference source.



Write About It

Write a paragraph describing the activity on a ship. What are the sailors and passengers doing? Include at least two words from your Word Web.

Key Vocabulary

ascent
endeavored
entangled
ratlines
rigging
seasoned
treacherous

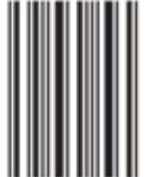
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